

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

SP-03 AID-20 IGA-02 AGR-20 SWF-02 IO-14 DOTE-00 DRC-01

/130 W

----- 127951

R 101539Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3979

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN RAILWAYS BACK IN ACTION - AT LEAST FOR TIME
BEING

REF: LAGOS 3995

SUMMARY: INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE, WHICH HAS STOPPED ALL RAIL
TRAFFIC IN NIGERIA SINCE MAY 6, ENDED LATE MAY 9. FULL RAIL
SERVICE EXPECTED TO BE RESTORED BY MAY 11 OR 12, BUT WITH
POSSIBILITY OF NEW INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE BY ANOTHER UNION
TAKING PLACE NEXT WEEK. END SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING LENGTHY TRIPARTITE MEETING MAY 9 BETWEEN RAILWAY
AND PORTS TRANSPORT AND CLERICAL STAFF UNION, NRC MANAGEMENT
AND LABOR PERMSEC KOKU, AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON ISSUES
WHICH LED TO STRIKE. UNION HAS CALLED OFF THEIR GO-SLOW AND
ASKED ALL WORKERS TO RETURN TO WORK MAY 10. ACCORDING TO UNION
LEADERS THEY WERE SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING BULK OF THEIR DEMANDS,
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INCLUDING UNSPECIFIED WAGE INCREASES. THEY CLAIM INDUSTRIAL

ARBITRATION TRIBUNAL DECISION, WHICH HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR TWO YEARS AND IS BASIS FOR ABOVE AGREEMENT, WAS SUDDENLY MADE AVAILABLE THE DAY AFTER THE STRIKE ACTION BEGAN. THEY THEREFORE BELIEVE NRC HAD BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING TRIBUNAL DECISION KEPT SECRET UNTIL UNION ACTION FORCED THE ISSUE. FULL RAIL SERVICE EXPECTED TO BE RESTORED BY MAY 11 OR 12. NRC OFFICIALS REPORT RAIL SERVICE BEGINNING GET UNDERWAY MORNING MAY 10.

2. SETTLEMENT OF THIS DISPUTE DOES NOT MEAN END OF NRC INDUSTRIAL TROUBLES. OTHER UNIONS CATERING TO OTHER CATEGORIES RAILWAY EMPLOYEES ARE OPENLY SPLIT OVER SEVERAL ISSUES, SUCH AS NRC TRANSFER AND PROMOTION POLICIES, AND SOME UNIONS DEMANDING REMOVAL OF NRC'S ACTING GENERAL MANAGER. THESE UNIONS THREATENING TO STRIKE IN PROTEST OF NRC'S POLICIES WHICH ALLEGEDLY PROMOTE TRIBALISM AND REGIONALISM. THESE CLAIMS ARE OPPOSED BY SEVERAL OTHER UNION LEADERS, WHO SAY THEY WILL DEFY ANY STRIKE ACTION ON THESE ISSUES. INTERWOVEN WITH ALL THIS ARE VARIOUS MOVES TO OBTAIN WAGE AND ALLOWANCES INCREASES FOR NRC EMPLOYEES. ONE UNIONIST WHO FAVORS REMOVAL OF NRC GENERAL MANAGER HAS PRIVATELY VOICED THE BELIEF THAT STRIKE ACTION COULD WELL TAKE PLACE NEXT WEEK, THEREBY AGAIN THREATENING RAIL TRAFFIC.

3. COMMENT: SUCCESS OF ONE UNION IN OBTAINING WAGE INCREASES, EVEN THOUGH THEIR CLAIMS ARE SEVERAL YEARS OLD, COULD STRENGTHEN RESOLVE OF OTHER UNIONS TO PUSH THEIR CLAIMS AT THIS TIME. WE UNDERSTAND LABOR MINISTRY TOOK FAIRLY HARD STAND IN PRIVATE MEETINGS BUT THIS HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY PUBLICITY AND MAY BE UNKNOWN TO OTHER UNIONS. GIVEN SPLIT AMONG VARIOUS UNIONS INVOLVED, IT STILL APPEARS UNCERTAIN WHETHER FURTHER INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES WILL TAKE PLACE OR NOT. IN EVENT SUCH ACTIONS DO OCCUR, THEIR IMPACT ON NRC OPERATIONS WOULD DEPEND ON WHICH UNIONS ARE INVOLVED, AND IS THUS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT IN ADVANCE. WILL ATTEMPT TO SOUND OUT OTHER UNION LEADERS ON THIS SUBJECT OVER THE WEEKEND.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, POLICIES, LABOR DISPUTES, STRIKE SETTLEMENT, TRIBALISM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LAGOS04087
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740116-0558
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740558/aaaabznr.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LAGOS 3995
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <11 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NIGERIAN RAILWAYS BACK IN ACTION - AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING
TAGS: ELAB, ETRN, NI, NIGERIAN RAILWAY CORP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005